

# Papa's Wisdom

I greet you in the spirit of our brotherhood. I am Dan Pecaut -- Brilliant Wolf

I'm writing you today because I have great love for the ManKind Project and our work healing the hearts of men. My commitment includes eight years of service to my local center here in Sioux City, Iowa. Both of my sons, now in their late twenties were blessed by taking the New Warrior Training Adventure and participating in those all important Integration Groups.

I've been especially blessed by the wisdom and love of "papa". I want to share that story with you.

But before I do, an old saying goes "commitment calls to commitment." As a committed man who has been blessed by this work, I am calling out to you. The ManKind Project is looking for more men to commit their time, their gifts and their gold to help us sustain and grow the organization into our next 25 years of success. We need your help. Please join us through one of the three easy to access campaigns running right now. First, there is Membership – this is the cultural shift that will sustain us as a successful non-profit. Then, the Chairman's Campaign and Foundation Builders are open to make the long term investments in infrastructure that will help us grow, expand our programs and reach our audacious goal of 1,000,000 men in circles.



Enjoy my story. And join me in supporting the ManKind Project.

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**Russell Pecaut** was my hero. Actually, we grandkids called him "Papa". I admired his integrity and his hearty laugh. Papa was my role model.

He lived from 1902 to 2000, 98 years. In 1979, when I graduated college and joined the family investment firm in Sioux City, Iowa, I regretted that Papa had already retired to California.

It would have been so neat to work side by side with him for a few years. However, he did return to Iowa in the summers to visit family and friends.

On those occasions, he would make it a point to take me to lunch at his old favorite, Bishop's Cafeteria. They had a chocolate Ambrosia pie that was to die for. I cherished those days: the young man in me feeling like a real businessman with the firm's founder taking me to lunch while the little boy felt giddy with delight that I would get to have Papa all to myself.

On one of those lunches, a fine June day in the early 1980's, the conversation was light and rolling when Papa leaned in. His voice dropped. I instinctively knew that something very important was about to be spoken. I moved to the edge of my seat. He told me that I'd have just a couple moments in my life when a great opportunity would appear, an opportunity that would make all the difference.

When such a moment appeared, I would know

it. And what I did with those moments would determine the shape of my life. I had only the foggiest idea of what he was talking about but was all ears at this point.

Then he went on to share a bit of his story. In the 1930's, in the depth of the Great Depression, the Badgerow Building came up for sale. Back in the day, it was the premier office building in Sioux City. A beautiful art deco design with night lights that lit up the sculptured top of the building. Papa was invited to join a group that was going to put in a bid to buy the building.

Papa thought it over, but was afraid that it would stretch him too thin what with the Depression and a family to raise and all. He declined. And, he intoned to me, he regretted that decision ever since. He'd known it was the rare sort of an opportunity one seldom sees in a lifetime, and he had passed.

His second opportunity arose in the mid 1950's. His sons, Dick (my father) and Jack, had graduated from college and joined him at an investment firm called C.W. Britton's. As the boys got their feet under them, Papa proposed that they leave Britton and start their own firm. His sons had no capital, so Papa knew he and my grandmother — who Papa lovingly referred to as their "silent partner"--would be risking pretty much their entire net worth.

They made the leap in 1960 and never looked

back. Pecaut and Company was profitable from day one. Papa marveled at how well it had all gone and said to me numerous times that it had all turned better than he'd ever dreamed. He felt so blessed.

On March 1, 2011, some 30 years after Papa had forecasted just such a moment, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity appeared for me. Mike Elser of the Fund the Plan committee had challenged us to complete the funding by March 31. We were just above \$200,000 with a goal of \$400,000.

My first thought was despairing, "How the hell are we going to do that?" The next day, the same words became a puzzle to be solved, "How the hell are we going to do that?" Consensus for change was building across the Mankind Project — thanks to the heroic efforts of Bruce Maxwell in particular.

And yet it seemed clear to me that nothing would happen until we funded the plan. Without the funds to hire professional staff and purchase modern systems, it was all talk. The organization was failing financially. We needed to Fund the Plan and soon.

In the fall of 2010, we had started from nowhere. We didn't have reliable financials. No organized donor lists. Our initial committee had to assemble our own data. We began piecing together a development campaign in late 2010. We had a lot of work to do and not much time to do it.

Individual gifts trickled in, but I found the big donors mostly skeptical.

They loved the New Warrior Training and what MKP had given them. And yet, they saw giving funds to a dysfunctional administration as pissing money away.

I totally understood where they were coming from. AND I asked "won't you join me in changing MKP to a first class professionally run volunteer organization that we can all be proud of?" I took heart that there was essentially unanimous agreement from discerning businessmen that MKP trainings and groups were outstanding. The issue was clear — we needed a quality professional staff at the headquarters.

Back to March 1. Papa's wisdom came to me at that moment. When would I ever have the opportunity to make such a significant impact on the world? What a monster impact to help evolve MKP into an operating dynamo with

world class trainings and groups serving millions of men! MKP had already developed the hardest part — infrastructure — with 32 centers training centers in the U.S. already in place and 45,000 plus men already initiated.

Trainings already honed to greatness by thousands and thousands of man-hours of inspiration, perspiration, trial and error. Hundreds of men's circles were already in place, operating at a deep level of trust seldom before experienced. As Bill Wick once said, "When it comes to running circles, MKP runs circles around everyone else."

We had the GIFT. Now it was time to launch it into the world. 25 years had taken us to the birthing place. Papa said when the moment came I would know it. I knew it.

So..."How the hell are we going to do this?" We needed about another \$180,000 to get there. I calculated we could raise \$100,000 if I offered a 50% matching gift of \$50,000. To create urgency, we could set the deadline for receiving the match at March 31. Throw in a bit more with momentum and collaborative magic and we'd be there.

I'd never been part of something viral before. It was absolutely exhilarating! A man from New England created a webpage with a button to "Fund the Plan".

Men started hitting that button from all over the country. Emails were flying. Progress reports breathlessly broadcast updated totals: \$300,000. \$325,000. \$350,000.

When the smoke cleared, some 600 men had given to Fund the Plan.

**And at midnight, March 31, we cleared \$400,000!**

I can't tell you the joy and other worldly sense of connection and mission this has brought me. I invite you to join me in birthing a new MKP.

Drop into your heart and see what arises. If you're like me, you'll see the rare sort of opportunity one seldom sees in a lifetime. Just as Papa predicted.

In service,  
Dan Pecaut  
8/26/11